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ABSTRACT

The assessment process in whole language classrooms in the Honolulu (Hawaii) School District is described. The development of alternative measures based on actual student performances was a natural outcome of the teachers' training and implementation of a holistic education/whole language program. Multiple and multidimensional assessment emerged from the holistic perspective, resulting in performance-based measures that included authentic samples of students' work. The systematic gathering of selected works led to the development of student portfolios and the student summary profile. Assessment is treated as an integral part of the instructional and learning processes rather than as pre/post measures on test items. Formal and informal measures and process and product measures are being tested in Chapter 1 programs and in Students of Limited English Proficiency programs. Three years of development have led to some significant results in sustained growth in student achievement. Classroom teachers are recognizing the worth of assessment and evaluation as an integral part of instruction. Performance-based measures developed through portfolios can serve as a significant way to measure student growth and development more accurately. Thirteen figures and one table are included. (SLD)

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STUDENT PORTFOLIO AND PROFILES: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MULTIPLE ASSESSMENT IN WHOLE LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

Donald Y. Enoki

Honolulu School District

A paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, April 20-24, 1992

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STUDENT PORTFOLIO AND PROFILES: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MULTIPLE ASSESSMENT IN WHOLE LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

INTRODUCTION

A growing national concern over the limitations of traditional evaluation methods based primarily on standardized norm-referenced tests in measuring and reporting student performance, has led to the development of major research efforts in multiple assessment. Currently, most forms of assessments attempt to measure highly specific and specialized kinds of knowledge, yet with limited application outside of the schools. Students are tested and evaluated for what they **know** rather than what they **understand** and are capable of applying. Teaching practices which emphasize the acquisition of language skills only, traditionally result in knowledge **learned** rather than knowledge **understood and applied.** These kinds of skills have very little relevance outside of the classroom.

The focus of assessment practices should be on the 'mastery of ongoing processes' (R. Zessoules and H. Gardner, 1992) such as, the students capability of integrating information to form higher levels of conceptualization and not simply possession of information and the mastery of skills. Assessment must be viewed as an on-going process and an integral part of the instruction and not as gross 'pre/post' measures of student growth to be compared with everyone else but with himself/herself.

Recent research and pilot testing on multiple assessment and multiple measures have begun to demonstrate various alternatives in gathering, validating, and measuring student progress and in determining proficiencies. Major focus has been on student performance-based measures within the framework of holistic education and whole language teaching/learning. Authentic assessment based on the actual performance data that are gathered on the students' work, serve as the basis for determining classroom progress.

Multiple-measure assessment is a major attempt at placing assessment where it rightfully belongs -- not as measurements to drive the curriculum and instruction, as in the case with traditional norm-referenced tests but rather, places assessment as an integral, and on-going part of the curriculum and instruction in real and authentic settings.

A PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Honolulu School District in the Hawaii school system is identified as the largest of seven (7) districts in the state. The District located in the urban City of Honolulu consists of fifty seven (57) public schools with an enrollment of over thirty five thousand (35,000), including nearly fifty percent (4,500) of the state's ten thousand (10,000) second language speaking students whose dominant language is not English. These students represent over twenty five (25) different languages and cultures in the District and are identified as recent immigrants or second-generation children of non-English speaking parents. The Students of Limited English Proficiency (SLEP) program serves as the major instructional program in grades K to 12 to assist these students to learn English as a second language (ESL) and to adjust to the American culture in the Hawaiian setting. The

program enables the students to acquire basic communication skills through a holistic education/whole language philosophical framework so that they can participate in the regular classroom instruction and other school activities. With a program funding of over $2.2 million a year and with a teaching staff over one hundred eighty (180), the SLEP program in several schools has been identified as being exemplary both at the state and national levels.

The Honolulu School District also serves over three thousand four hundred (3,400) students in grades three to nine of the State's nearly eleven thousand (11,000) students in the Chapter 1 program. The federally funded program is targeted to serve the economically and academically disadvantaged students who have experienced continuous problems in the communication skills and specifically in learning to read. The District over the past fifteen (15) years has developed its curriculum and instructional program based on the sociopsycholinguistic principles of holistic education/whole language with significant and positive results. In the past five (5) consecutive years, five (5) of the District's Chapter 1 project schools have been sited as being exemplary both at the state and national levels according to the United States Secretary's Initiative Awards for exemplary programs.

Both the SLEP and the Chapter 1 programs in the Honolulu District provide services to nearly twenty (20) percent of its thirty-five thousand (35,000) students who are identified as having academic and/or social adjustment problems. The programs (SLEP, Chapter 1, and most recently the Gifted and Talented) identified under the Compensatory Education Section of the District have been effectively integrated under the philosophical and conceptual framework of Holistic Education/Whole Language. The Comprehensive Language Improvement Program (CLIP) became the model under which developed the monitoring program improvement plan referred as **Quality Monitoring** (QM); the curriculum and instructional plan for each learner called **Student Record Profile** (SRP); the multiple and multidimensional measurement and assessment plan identified as **Multiple Assessment**; the student performance-based data gathering process called **Portfolios**; and the summary of the students proficiency measured within specific periods of time known as the **Student Summary Profile**.

The development of the various plans of action cited previously, evolved systematically over the past fifteen (15) years. As examples, the development of the QM process grew as a result of a need to collaboratively meet as a team (eg. project teachers, principals, parents, regular teachers) to discuss the students' and teachers' progress. As a systematic process of examining program implementation variables and evaluation results and translating them into positive action plans to improve student achievement, QM provided the effective measures for quality control. A dynamic process, QM promotes school level use of evaluation data for program improvement, provides for an ongoing identification and analysis of variables affecting student achievement, and ensures fidelity of program implementation. An important part of QM is the continuous exploration for better ways of providing instruction to program participants. The identification and analysis of important variables provide a sound basis for examining program implementation and impact. The receptivity of the QM process by the teaching principals and parents has helped to make it an effective part in the total holistic education/whole language framework of CLIP. The Student Record Profile or SRP is

another example of the holistic approach to developing a comprehensive plan for student improvement. This process-oriented instrument identifies and measures each student's progress in the cognitive and affective domains of language and learning. The standards set for the cognitive skills evolved over a period of several years by the teachers and district staff, and based on past longitudinal pupil performance records. Clearly established criteria were developed and based upon the specific objectives contained in the State's Language Arts guidelines.

Gradually, while the standardized norm-referenced tests, such as the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) and the Basic Inventory of Natural Language (BINL) were still being used for the purposes of student identification, selection, diagnosing, and determining pre/post measures of achievement, the need to develop truer and authentic performance-based measures of student progress and proficiencies became evidently clear. Alternative measures for assessment previously identified as "optional measures" and "informal measures" no longer could suffice as "real measures" of student progress if assessment, in its truest of sense, is in fact an integral and an active part of the teachers daily instruction and curriculum planning. (Refer to Denny Taylor's "Teaching without Testing: Assessing the Complexity of Children's Literacy Learning.")
As a result, the development of alternative measures based on actual student performances was a natural outcome of the teachers' training and implementation of a holistic education/whole language program.

The guiding principle under which holistic education is based focuses on processing life's learnings. Included are the elements of humanistic education; a "total person," or holistic education approach; emphasis on the positive; development of self-esteem and metacognitive awareness; and the emphasis on self-assessment and self-directed learning.

Whole language serves as the vehicle and linkage to implementing the principles of processing life's learning in holistic education through language. The major elements included in whole language are:

- a philosophical base or set of beliefs about learning, language, child development, and about reading, writing, listening/speaking processes;
- a comprehension or meaning-centered language program;
- a sociopsycholinguistic base which recognizes the value of culture, cognition, and language as equally important;
- a language development approach which uses language in its natural and authentic settings;
- a whole-to-part-to-whole approach in which all systems of language (i.e. graphophonic, syntax, and semantics) are involved in any literary encounter;
- a child/learner centered system in which risk-taking by active involvement in the learning process is encouraged;

- a change in the teachers' role from a all-knowing dispenser of information to a collaborator, orchestrator, researcher, assessor, observer, facilitator and, a friend of the student;

- a system which encourages the development of metacognitive awareness and self-awareness on the part of teacher and students and in determining one's educational self-destiny (e.g. 'zones of proximal development, Lev Vygosky, Thought and Language, 1962) and;

- a system of assessment and evaluation which recognizes and values multiple and multidimensional forms of student data, inclusive of student performances, self-checklists, student samples of writings, logs, observations, and interviews.

TOWARDS PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT

Educational assessment defined here is a process of collecting data for the purposes of making decisions about students progress and proficiencies, developed prior to 1915. **Classroom Accountability** was rather informal and rested with the teachers who measured how the students were progressing based upon what they were teaching.

Between 1916 to 1920 **School Accountability** was the major focus of assessment and the use of the "I.Q." test and "school surveys" served primarily as the way in which student performance and schoolwide academic effectiveness were measured. Then during 1920-1950 **National Accountability** became the prime concern in assessment. Formal standardized norm-referenced tests became in vogue. Hundreds of tests focusing on product outcome measures were developed and distributed nationally. These tests were designed to sort out the students on the academic continuum. These standardized tests by nature of their design further segregated the high achievers from low achievers.

In 1950 the next major focus of assessment became the **Individualized Criterion** referenced measures in which students needed to achieve competency standards of performance set by others in order to graduate and/or "pass a test." Competency-based

testing also served as basis for measuring teacher and school effectiveness.

While these standardized norm-referenced and criterion reference tests are still widely used today, the need for alternative measures became more critical as researchers, administrators, teachers, and curriculum developers realized the severe limitation of standardized, product/outcome tests when applied to helping to improve instruction and student performance. Thus, as recent as 1987 major efforts were undertaken to develop student **Performance-Based Accountability** measures.

The theoretical framework under which performance-based assessment rests are the following:

- measurements determining students' progress must include a comprehensive view of the "holistic learner;"
- authentic assessment in whole language teaching occurs continuously and daily as the teacher and students engage in interactional and transactional teaching and learning situations;
- truer assessment of the learners' progress in the classroom is best determined by the teachers and students, rather than test made by others;
- assessment and evaluation are not separate from curriculum and instruction but rather an integral part which should provide students the opportunity for self-reflections, celebration of efforts, and modifying their standards based upon performance;
- multi-dimensional assessment inclusive of the learners cultural, cognitive, and skills development, should all be viewed and analyzed. In this process the elements of formal/informal, process/product measures should be considered;
- whole language assessment considers content, thinking processes and skill building from an integrated approach rather than in separate bits and pieces as traditionally prescribed.
- whole language assessment provides the learner with a variety of ways (even beyond language) to demonstrate proficiency and academic progress, hence multiple assessment.

MULTIPLE ASSESSMENT

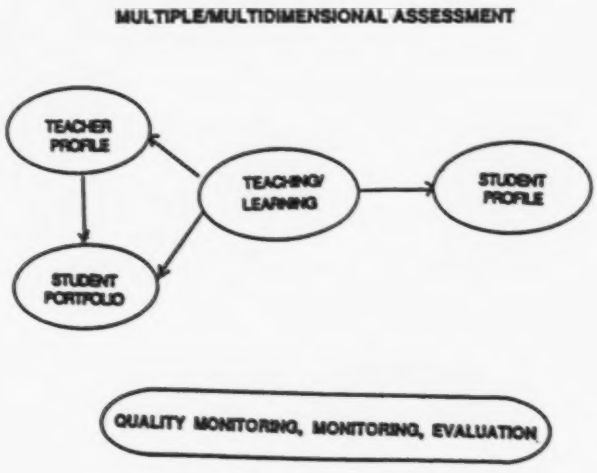
The research efforts in the development of multiple assessment (eg. Portfolios/Profiles) began with the need to measure the effectiveness of the student's progress in a whole language classroom over a continuous basis, and measurable at any given time. Current practices in this performance-based student assessment were reviewed in relationship to advances in evaluation theory and practices. A holistic approach for viewing students multiple abilities, talents, and skills was used. Although the terms diagnosis, assessment, and evaluation were not synonymous by definition, they were applied simultaneously as an integral part of the instructional and learning processes. Farr and

Carey best summarized the use for multiple assessment in their statement,

> *" The key to good assessment will not be found in one or two tools that can be used to answer all our questions ... It will be found in the process of choosing assessment strategies that will help answer a particular set of questions ... No single piece of student work could possibly capture the authentic, continuous, multidimensional interactive requirement of sound assessment .." (R. Farr and R.F. Carey, 1986)*

Valencia and Pearson further supported multiple measures in reading assessment by stating, "If we are to foster healthy links between assessment and classroom instruction, we must develop new measures of reading. (S. Valencia, P.D. Pearson, 1986.)

Multiple and multidimensional assessment emerged from a holistic perspective in which teacher and student summary profiles provided useful information in strengthening the teaching/learning processes. These performance-based measures included authentic samples of students' work such as written composition, oral presentations, art works, and other three-dimensional materials developed by the students. In addition, the assessment process was an integral part of curriculum and instructional processes. The systematic gathering of selected students' works led to the development of the student portfolios and student summary profile.



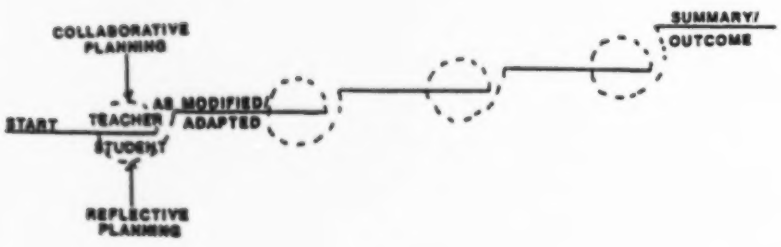
STUDENT PORTFOLIOS AND PROFILES

Portfolios developed as a natural outcome of student performance-based assessment. Samples of students' works were collected in a systematic and organized manner by the teachers and students to monitor and measure the growth of the students' knowledge, skills, and social development.

In a holistic/whole language classroom portfolios are based on several assumptions:

- represents a philosophy that supports assessment as an integral part of instruction;
- provides authentic measures of students proficiency and achievements;
- includes samples of students work which show the depth and breadth of ones knowledge;
- includes the gathering of samples which are not only paper and pencil tests or formal tests, but other measures such as rating scales, observation checklists, conducting interviews, and review of previous records;
- supports and honors both process and products of learning as well as formal and informal measures of learning;
- endorses the active participation of teacher and students in the planning, development, and implementation of measurements to establish criteria and standards collaboratively and reflectively.

REFLECTIVE/COLLABORATIVE PLANNING



Collaborative and reflective planning results in higher levels of metacognition and affective development for both teachers and students.

ELEMENTS OF A PORTFOLIO

The major elements of a portfolio consists of a sound rationale which includes the philosophy and principles of holistic education/whole language. Portfolios must contain qualitative and quantitative measures based on pre-established criteria and standards collaboratively developed by teachers and students.

Documentation of the students works insures that there is an insightful record of each student performance. The gathering and documentation of work samples include some of the students' "best" products as well as other selected works which may yet provide meaningful information data in measuring the students' progress. This "process-folio" provides richer opportunity for learning and assessment because they are intended to

document the evaluation of new understanding over time and across projects. In addition, as a diagnostic process, the process-folio provides a chronology of the students' learning over a period of time and a portrait of the students' changing abilities as well as a daily picture of his/her performance. It is more than just finished products. The strength of portfolios lie in being able to document the "bibliography" of student products, from the inception, an idea or experience to the changes or revisions and re-thinking over time. Portfolios in whole language attempts to capture and portray the multidimensional development and learnings of students. In essence, portfolios provide efficient records of students' growth and accomplishments "wholistically." It must be viewed as an integral part of the teachers' and students' teaching/learning experiences, and not a separate evaluation to be used solely for grading and for political decision-making purposes.

In evaluating portfolios several key guidelines should be considered. Criteria and standards should be set prior to implementation. Standards of excellence or on the demonstration of growth within an individual portfolio should be the guide rather than comparisons among students' works. The portfolio system must include sufficient characteristics at each level to locate each students' level of work in terms of the standards that have been set, such as those included in the Student Record Profile (SRP). While initially, the conceptual structure which identifies the underlying goals for student learning should be known to both teacher and learner (i.e. If the goal is to develop oral language, a tape should be included.), the portfolio should also include the physical structure to demonstrate student progress (i.e. structure based on subject area, chronological order, etc.).

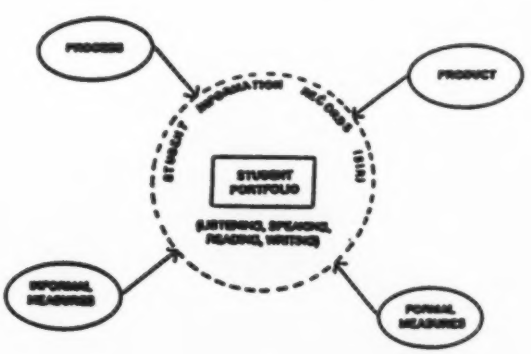
The portfolio items that are selected should have a clear and efficient system for documentation; a timeline for identifying regular times during the school year for selecting students' work; and a system for teacher/learner reflections by attaching written statements of each sample of work (i.e. SLEP Portfolio Sample Rating Form).

IMPLEMENTATION OF A PORTFOLIO SYSTEM

In implementing the portfolio system, it was necessary to start with a comprehensive review of the Students' Profile. This review consisted of analyzing the Student Information Records (SIR) that included various aspects of the items which were to be included in the students portfolio.

There were four (4) major measures that were included in the gathering/selecting of samples for the SIR. These four (4) measures were the formal and informal measures and the process and product measures.

STUDENT PROFILE

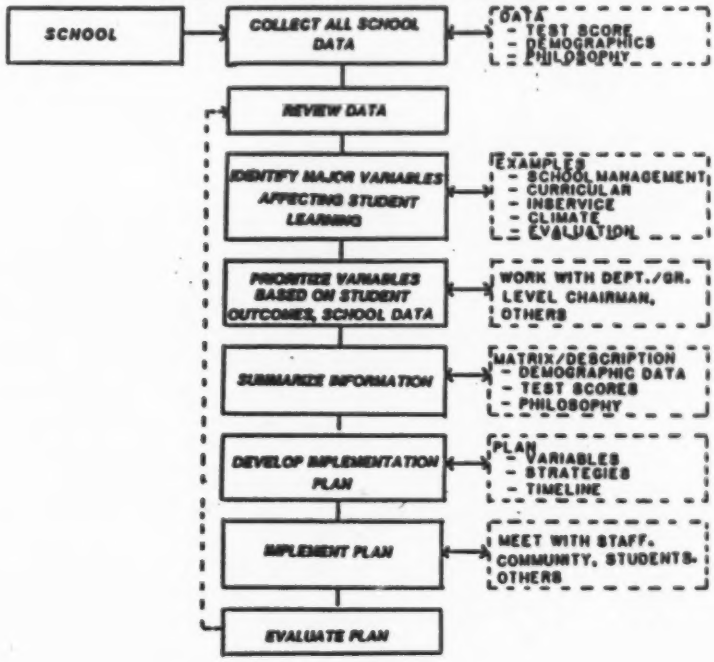


The **Formal Measure** consisted of report card grades, standardized achievement tests such as the Basic Inventory of Natural Language (BINL), Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT), Hawaii State Test of Essential Competencies (HSTEC), and other standardized measures. Data in this category were reviewed and analyzed.

FORMAL MEASURES

The results of the information were included for discussion and planning in the Quality Monitoring (QM) process conducted at the school sites. The QM process greatly enhanced the opportunity for the teachers, administrators and even parents to participate in identifying the students problems and in recommending changes for more effective teaching/learning strategies.

STEPS TO QUALITY MONITORING



The Informal Measures included four (4) major elements and subelements. The Student Record Profile or SRP was categorized under the elements of **performance-based measures.** Very specific language, cultural and survival skills were identified in the SRP for the bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) program (SLEP). Specific criteria were set to measure the students' performances.

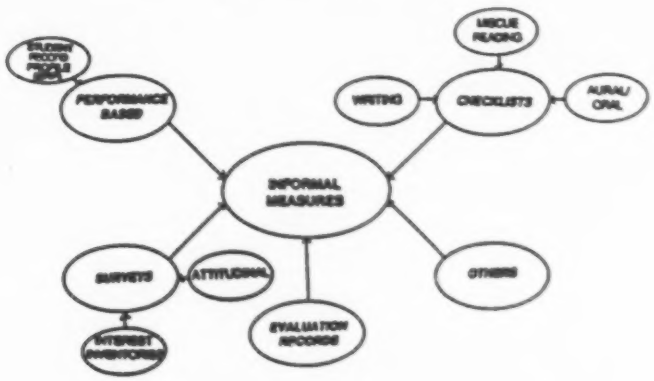
The **Checklists** constituted a second major element in the category of informal measures. Included in the checklists were the Writing Checklist, Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI), and the Aural/Oral Observation Checklist.

Each of the checklists had established criteria for measurement. Completion of the instruments were either done by the teacher or the students.

The **Evaluation Record** was another element under informal measures. These records contained summary narratives of the students past performances, generally prepared by the teachers.

The **Surveys** included attitudinal survey records and interest inventories of the student. Students as well as teachers prepared the surveys to determine the students interests in the affective areas.

INFORMAL MEASURES

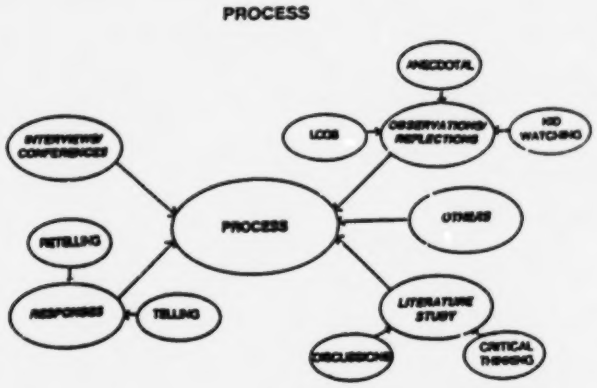


The **Process Measures** were identified by four (4) elements. These elements included the **Observations/Reflections** in which "Kid Watching," Reading, Writing Logs, and Anecdotal Records provided very specific information on how well the students were capable of processing information. The **Interview/Conference** was the second element of the process measurement. Conferencing with the students and parents was an effective strategy to determining areas of interests and in identifying for non-performance.

The **Response** was the third element in process measures. Basic to the response element was the **Retelling and Telling** activities. Retelling skills were found to be highly effective in measuring comprehension and recall.

The **Literature Study** element was the fourth area to provide process measurement. Included in this element were the **Critical Thinking** and **Discussion** activities.

Each of the instruments used to gather processing measures, had previously set standards of performances and the criteria in which to determine attainment at various levels of cognitive and affective functions.



The **Product Measures** consisted of six (6) elements. Under the Literature Extension Activities element was the Students' Self Evaluation Form - Literature Groups. In developing portfolios in whole language teaching, students participate actively with the teachers in setting objectives and performance criteria. This collaborative effort in decision-making and goal setting have helped significantly to begin placing responsibility and accountability equitably with the students and teachers.

Multi-media is a second element of the product measures in which selected visual materials as well as audio materials are used for assessing the students' performances. Specific art works, video productions, recorded speech presentations, and other three-dimensional objects are gathered for review.

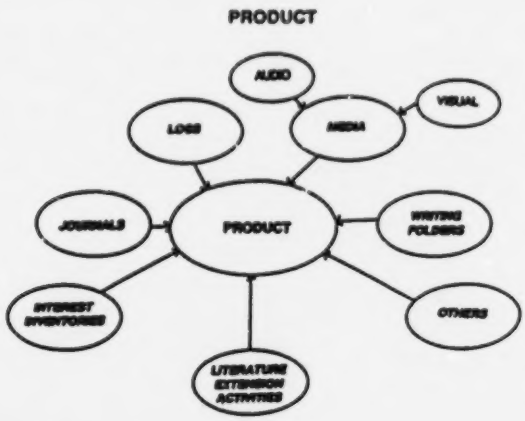
Writing Folders serve as the third element of product measures and contain writing samples of the students, both formal and informal writings, literary writing samples, inclusive of creative story writing, poetry, research reports and musical pieces. In addition to the writing samples, the Writing Process Checklist is used by the teachers to rate the quality of the students' writings. Narrative comments are used as supportive statements on the ratings. These ratings include specific criteria and previously established objective standards developed and supported by the teachers.

Journal writing is another element under product measures which is used to keep progress checks on the students language development. The teachers' journal entries are formally in a book or on pieces of paper attached to the students' products. Journals are also maintained by the students on activities conducted (i.e. literature reviews, literature study groups, or progress on a research project).

Logs determining book report entries, categorizing of books based on text sets and research help the students to refer to their notes on a regular basis. Teacher-kept logs

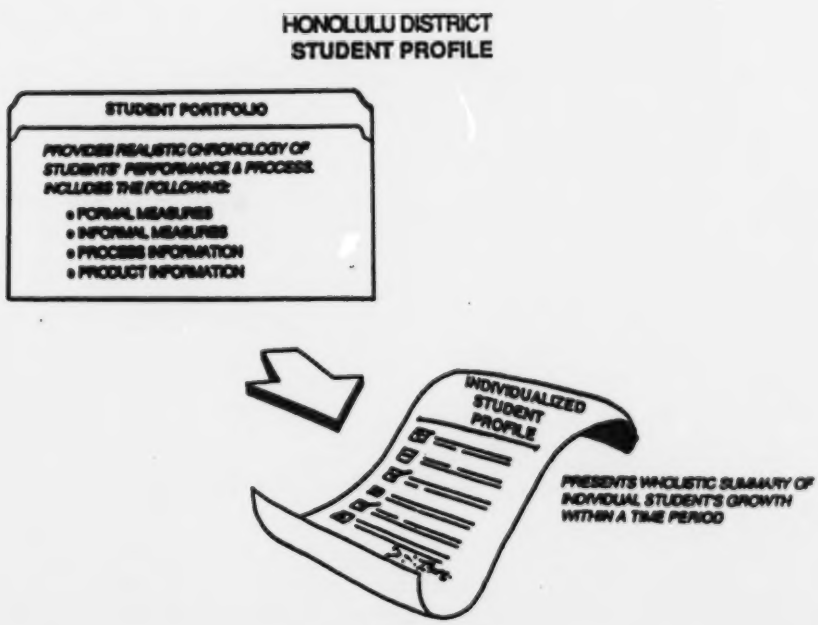
on the students, also serve as an effective way to maintain progress-checks.

The element of interest inventories has been used successfully to assist teachers in planning and guiding students according to their interest surveys. The use of reflections as a strategy supports both the teachers and students to collaboratively plan on activities that would be most meaningful to the student.



THE STUDENT SUMMARY PROFILE

Based upon the realistic chronology of students performance and progress data that have been gathered and documented through Student Portfolio, the **Student Summary Profile** provides an objective as well as a detailed subjective summary of each student throughout the school year. Specific measures inclusive of the formal, informal, process, and product information present a holistic summary of the individual students' growth within a time period.



The Evaluation Data Collection Form serves as an example of the detailed summary information which documents test data on the standardized tests (i.e. Basic Inventory of Natural Language (BINL) and the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT); scores from the Student Record Profile (SRP) in cognitive and affective areas; and other relevant student data).

Honolulu District
Compensatory Education

SLEP EVALUATION DATA COLLECTION FORM
(Student Level Data)

PLEASE PRINT IN BLACK INK OR TYPE

SCHOOL Elementary SCHOOL CODE 140

STUDENT'S NAME [illegible] GRADE LEVEL 6
LAST FIRST

I.D. NUMBER 1409100797 SLEP CATEGORY MEP

SLEP TEACHER(s) [illegible]

PARTICIPATION IN (Check as applicable):

___ Chapter 1 ___ Remedial Reading
___ Special Education ___ Others (List) _____
___ Basic Skills _____

IF STUDENT HAS EXITED FROM SLEP (Code 3), INDICATE DATE (MONTH/YEAR) OF EXIT ___/___

A. PRE/POST TEST

	PRETEST					POSTTEST					
TEST NAME	EPT LEVEL	DATE	TEST SCORE RAW	%ILE	NCE	TEST NAME	LEVEL	DATE	TEST SCORE RAW	%ILE	NCE
BINL	Fun	9/90	2.0	1	1	BINL	Fun	5/91	102.2	57	54
MAT LANGUAGE						MAT LANGUAGE	Inter	4/91	24	26	38.5
MAT READING						MAT READING	Inter	4/91	12	2	6.7

B. STUDENT RECORD PROFILE (Number of objectives completed as reported in Student Record Profile at the end of the year.)

Skill Areas	Score	Skill Areas	Score
[illegible]	6	Culture	6
[illegible]	15	Basic Survival	8
[illegible]	4	School Survival	9
[illegible]	2	Community Survival	5

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In the language and other skills areas, a summary profile of each students' progress is recorded. In addition to a scale score for each area, for example, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the teacher provides a detailed narrative analysis to justify his/her ratings.

Honolulu District
Students of Limited English Proficiency (SLEP) Program

STUDENT SUMMARY PROFILE SY_____

Name Rie Date 6/91

Teacher Rae Grade 6

Rate the student's progress on an individual basis in the following areas:

AREAS	OVERALL PROGRESS Minimal → Excellent 1	2	3	4	5
LISTENING					X

Justification:
Rie is always attentive during class discussions. She listens to others and responds when called upon. She is able to follow directions well.

SPEAKING					X

Justification:
Rie has made excellent progress this year as far as expanding her vocabulary and being able to express her thoughts in English. She sometimes lacks self-confidence and needs to be encouraged to "volunteer" more and share with the group.

READING					X

Justification:
Rie has made very good progress in decoding. She is able to read and comprehend material at about the 3rd grade level. She makes sense out of what she reads and relates it to prior experience and reading. She understands the following story elements: setting, time, characters, mood, and plot.

WRITING					X

Justification:
Rie relates her experiences descriptively in her journal, and writes stories creatively. Her thinking is reflected in her writing, and it is greatly enhanced by her wonderful illustrations. She needs help with conventional spelling and grammar, but writes in complex sentences.

SUMMARY OF STANDARDIZED NORM-REFERENCE TEST DATA - 1987 TO 1990 FOR THE SLEP AND CHAPTER 1 PROGRAMS

During the past three (3) years in both Chapter 1 and the SLEP programs, the standardized test results for the Fall to Spring periods have shown very positive and sustained student gains. The Chapter 1 program provides whole language services to the economically and academically disadvantaged students in grades 3 to 9. Over 3,400 Chapter 1 students receive instructional services annually. The SLEP program comprised of over 4,500 non-English and limited-English speaking students in grades K to 12 also incorporates a whole language philosophy and instructional services.

Based on the MAT6 evaluation results from 1987 to 1990 SY, the Chapter 1 students have sustained an average of over nine (9) Normal Curve Equivalence (NCE) pre/post

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gains at the elementary and eight (8) NCE gains at the secondary level. In addition, the percentage of positive gains have averaged over eighty-one (81) percent for four (4) consecutive years for both elementary and secondary grades combined.

HONOLULU DISTRICT CHAPTER 1

EVALUATION RESULTS

SCHOOL YEARS 1987-90

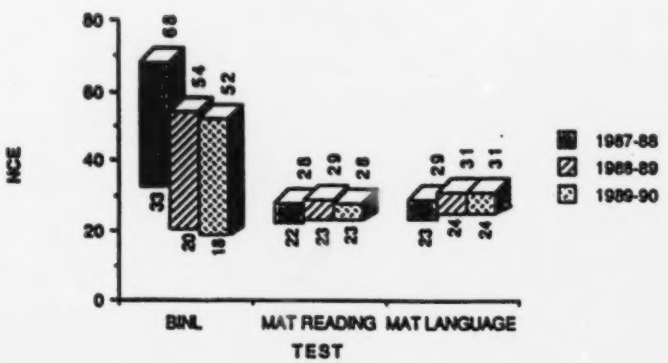
YEAR	NUMBER TESTED		NCE GAIN		DISTRICT AVERAGE	
	ELEM.	SEC.	ELEM.	SEC.	NCE GAIN	% MAKING POS. GAIN
1987-88	1,248	1,447	9	8	8	82
1988-89	1,247	1,313	9	8	9	82
1989-90	1,498	1,499	9	8	8	80
1990-91	1,647	1,076	9	8	9	83

The SLEP evaluation data for the school years 1987 to 1990 demonstrates sustained gains of nearly sixty (60) NCE (pre and post test) for both the elementary and secondary grades on the MAT6 Reading subtest and nearly seventy (70) NCE gains on the MAT6 Language subtests.

HONOLULU DISTRICT

SLEP MEAN NCE GAINS

1987-1990 SY



The language proficiency results on the BINL (Basic Inventory of Natural Language) for SLEP also showed an average NCE gain of thirty-four (34) for each of the three (3) years. This sustained gains occurred in spite of the fluctuating pre-test mean scores for the 1987-90 school years.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Within the past several years, performanced-based assessment has become the focus of researchers, test makers, teachers, curriculum trainers, and politicians. Alternative measures are being sought after by educators who profess to improve curriculum and instruction from a holistic/whole language philosophical base. The criticism by these educators on the proliferation and continued use of standardized norm-reference tests have been loud and strong. The arguments are several:

- there are severe limitations in standardized tests for instructional and curriculum improvement;
- there exists significant cultural and minority biases in the test items;
- negative connotations are inherent in standardized tests that are developed primarily as a sorting system for the low to high achievers rather than focusing on the positive traits of all learners; and
- the limited use of standardized testing to gather comparative data rather than data for improving each student's recognized areas of weaknesses and further developing the students areas of strengths.

One positive attempt has been undertaken by the Honolulu School District to develop the multiple and multidimensional assessment for curriculum and instructional improvement. As a student performance-based assessment effort, multiple/multidimensional assessment developed within a holistic/whole language philosophical framework. Students progress and proficiencies are measured daily in the classroom. Assessment is treated as an integral part of the instructional and the learning processes rather than as pre/post measures on test items which may not be relevant or even considered in the classroom.

The student Portfolio and Profile evolved as a natural outcome for measuring and documenting the individual progress of students. The categories of formal and informal, process and product measures are being tested in both the Chapter 1 and SLEP programs in the District. Three (3) years of development has begun to show some significant results. Students in these programs are performing well. These sustained growths have been validated over the past three (3) years, based on the MAT6, BINL test results as well as on the performance-based instruments and measures.

For the first time, classroom teachers are recognizing the worth of assessment and evaluation as an integral part of their instruction. Through collaborative and reflective planning between teachers and students, there is emerging a sensitivity and accountability for teaching and learning. Hopefully, performance-based measures developed through Portfolios will serve as a significant means to measure the students growth and development much more accurately and efficiently.

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